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General Assembly
Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

101st Meeting
Thursday, 13 April 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy ..... Côte d'Ivoire

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mwaungulu (Malawi) (Vice-President) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

Agenda item 37 *(continued)*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/885)

Draft resolution (A/49/L.65)

The President: Members will recall that at its 74th plenary meeting, on 2 December 1994, the Assembly adopted resolution 49/21 B, entitled "Financing of the Palestinian Police Force". Members will also recall that at its 99th plenary meeting, on 31 March 1995, the Assembly decided to reopen consideration of this sub-item, at the request of Norway, so that the Assembly could consider a draft resolution on the financing of the Palestinian Police Force.

The report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the Palestinian Police Force has been circulated in document A/49/885.

In this connection, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/49/L.65.

I call on the representative of Norway to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.65.

Mr. Biørn Lian (Norway): I have the pleasure to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.65, regarding on the financing of the Palestinian Police Force, on behalf of the following sponsors: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States of America.

On 2 December last year, the General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 49/21 B, in which the Secretary-General was requested to designate a United Nations agency to disburse, in light of the activities of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, the voluntary contributions given by donors for salaries and other start-up costs of the Palestinian Police Force for a period ending not later than the end of March 1995.

The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee was set up to coordinate external assistance to the Palestinian Authority effectively, including the financing of a Palestinian Police Force.

As can be seen from his report (A/49/885), the Secretary-General has designated the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as the agency responsible for

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implementation of resolution 49/21 B. A technical mechanism with procedures to be followed to effect payment of salaries and other recurrent costs of the Palestinian Police Force was set up on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding between representatives of the Palestinian Police Force and UNRWA, and witnessed by the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories and by a representative of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee.

I should like today to commend UNRWA which, together with the Office of the Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories and the United Nations Development Programme, and in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority and donors, has done a very satisfactory job of establishing an effective temporary mechanism for disbursing to the Palestinian Police Force the voluntary contributions that the donors have placed at UNRWA's disposal. I should also like to thank the donors, for their valuable contributions to the Palestinian Police Force.

Regrettably, despite these contributions, there is still a funding shortfall of $1.2 million for the total salaries for the period ending March 1995. With regard to other recurrent costs, only two months have been covered by donor contributions.

In light of the positive experience with the arrangement to date and the difficult financial situation of the Palestinian Authority, Norway, as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, believes that the arrangement should continue for some time; the objective of the present draft resolution — which has the full support of the parties — is to request the Secretary-General once again to designate UNRWA to disburse salaries and other start-up costs of the Palestinian Police Force for an additional period ending not later than 31 December 1995. This is reflected in paragraph 1 of the resolution. In our view, the wording "not later than" means that the present arrangement does not have to continue until the end of the year if other satisfactory arrangements are in place before that time.

In paragraph 2, all Member States are again encouraged to make voluntary contributions to the financing of the Palestinian Police Force through UNRWA. As the Secretary-General has made very clear in his report, the responsibility for providing the necessary funds lies with the donors: the United Nations operates only as a channel for voluntary contributions and not as a donor to the Police Force. Given the serious situation in the area and the very clear and urgent need for international assistance, I strongly hope that paragraph 2 is given all due consideration. The important role of the Palestinian Police Force has over the last weeks and days been clearly underlined. It is of fundamental importance for the continuation of the peace process to have this force up and running with a secure financial basis.

Norway has given high priority to this work. We do, however, underline the need for burden-sharing by all parties involved. While donor countries, in the short run, will have to renew their efforts, the Palestinian Authority should gradually take full financial responsibility for the Police Force. In order for this to happen, measures will have to be taken in order to secure the income base for the Palestinian Authorities.

Given the urgency of the security situation, Norway will soon give additional funding for the Palestinian Police Force.

I respectfully submit the draft resolution for adoption by consensus.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/49/L.65. I shall now call on the representative of the United States of America who wishes to speak in explanation of position. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Gelber (United States of America): The United States is pleased to join consensus on the draft resolution before the Assembly.

In September 1993, Israel and the PLO signed a historic Declaration of Principles, which began the process of bringing peace between Palestinians and Israelis. The next major step came in May 1994, when the parties concluded an agreement for the transfer of authority in the Gaza Strip and Jericho and the establishment of the Palestinian Police Force to maintain public order and internal security in these self-ruled areas.

Israel and the PLO concluded a further agreement in August 1994 which provided for a transfer of authority in the spheres of education and culture, health, social welfare, tourism and taxation. The parties are now working on additional agreements which will provide for elections and a further transfer of authority on the West Bank.

Throughout this process, a strong and credible Palestinian Police Force has been in the mutual interest of both Israel and the Palestinians, and is critical to the successful implementation of the Declaration of Principles and its follow-on agreements. Only in a stable and secure environment will it be possible to consolidate the peace gains to date and to achieve the economic and social conditions necessary to effect positive and sustained changes on the ground.

Against this background, we believe that continued international support for the Palestinian Police Force is particularly important and very much needed.

My delegation would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to paragraph 2 of the draft resolution before us, which

> "*Encourages* all Member States to contribute funds for this purpose through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East."

The United Nations mechanism has been a crucial and effective instrument in facilitating this support, and we urge that the draft resolution be adopted by consensus.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/49/L.65, entitled "Financing of the Palestinian Police Force".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/49/L.65?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 49/210).

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 43/177 of 15 December 1988, I call on the observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) *(interpretation from Arabic):* My delegation would like at the outset to express its deepest thanks to the Permanent Representative of Norway for introducing the draft resolution just adopted on the financing of the Palestinian Police Force. We should also like to thank him for his delegation's efforts in this regard.

We wish also to express our thanks to the Member States that sponsored the resolution, and of course, to all States Members of the Organization for adopting the resolution by consensus. That consensus was an expression of the importance attached by the international community to the important issue of maintaining a minimum reasonable level of financing for the Palestinian Police Force.

On this occasion, we must also express our appreciation to the donor countries and relevant United Nations organs in general and to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in particular.

While expressing that appreciation, we cannot but draw the attention of the Assembly to the grave deterioration in the economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem and, of course, the area under the Palestinian Authority.

We agree with the Permanent Representative of Norway on the need to share the burden, particularly from the point of view of the donor countries. It is most unfortunate that some of the donors have not honoured the commitments they have made to the Palestinian Authority in this regard even though for its part the Palestinian Authority is making every possible effort to fulfil all its obligations. Ensuring an income basis for the Palestinian side requires, in our view at least, specific measures by Israel to make radical changes in its policies and practices of the recent sorry period.

Some of those policies and practices have led directly to the deterioration in the Palestinian people's standard of living and in our economy. Perhaps the most salient example of these policies and practices is the enclosure of the territories, not only along the border with Israel but also against the rest of the world, and the dissection of the territories by separating the Gaza Strip from the West Bank, by isolating the West Bank from East Jerusalem and, indeed, by cutting some parts of the West Bank off from the rest.

It would, of course, be possible although superfluous to run off a list of the practices and policies that run counter to the agreements, including the economic agreement, contracted by the parties, but we merely call for an immediate end to them before it is too late.

Our Palestinian people will always appreciate the assistance it is receiving from the international community during this crucial period in its history and in its struggle towards its national rights, foremost among which is the right to build its national State with Jerusalem as its capital.

The President: I call on the representative of Israel, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): I do not intend to engage in a polemic debate with the Permanent Observer of the PLO. I believe that the draft resolution just adopted by the General Assembly is a very positive one, and Israel supported it. We would like to commend Norway for preparing this draft, and the donors for their valuable contribution to the Palestinian Police Force.

With regard to the comment made by the Permanent Observer of the PLO, I wish to state that the recent measures taken by the Government of Israel are not intended as a collective punishment of the Palestinians. These are very legitimate measures of self-defence in the light of the recent terrorist attacks perpetrated by Palestinian terrorists against Israeli civilians and soldiers.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 43/177 of 15 December 1988, I now call on the observer of Palestine, who also wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: I merely wished to comment briefly on the statement by the representative of Israel.

First, I must draw the attention of the representative of Israel to the need to use the official name of our delegation. We are the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations. That is our name, as accredited to the United Nations, and I am therefore not the Permanent Observer of the PLO. I express the hope that this usage is merely a technical error and does not express a political position, rejecting the use of the correct nomenclature.

Secondly, and much to my regret, the measures taken by Israel that I mentioned in my first statement were taken even before any of the latest events, which we for our part, strongly condemn.

I do not believe that anyone can justify those measures of Israel as legitimate, as the representative of Israel said they were: they include, *inter alia*, isolating the Gaza Strip from Egypt, closing off the West Bank from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and isolating the entire Gaza Strip from the West Bank. As I said, I do not wish to run off a list of measures such as withholding monies due to the Palestinian Authority from the taxation of our own Palestinian people. That is not my objective; I merely wanted to draw the attention of the international community to the gravity of the economic situation in the territories and to the need for all three parties — the donor countries, the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government — to take immediate steps to change the situation.

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 37.

Introduction of the report of the Fifth Committee

The President: I call on the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee to introduce the report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 146.

Mr. Djacta (Algeria), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee *(interpretation from French)*: I have the honour to present to the General Assembly Part III of the report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 146, which was considered by the Committee during the resumed forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Part III of the Fifth Committee's report entitled "Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991", is contained in document A/49/810/Add.2. In paragraph 8 of that report, the Fifth Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

I should like to point out that, once again, the Fifth Committee is not able to take a position on the mode of financing. In order to do so and to ensure that the Tribunal can operate meanwhile, the Committee decided to recommend authorizing the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the period 15 April to 14 July 1995, and decided also to set 14 July as the deadline for the Committee to take a decision regarding the mode of financing.

Agenda item 146 *(continued)*

Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991: report of the Fifth Committee (Part III) (A/49/810/Add.2)

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before it today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee".

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 146, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of Part III of its report. The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 49/242).

The President: The General Assembly thus has concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 146.

Programme of work

One item remains on our agenda for this morning, but it would seem that we no longer have the quorum necessary to take a decision on the request for the reopening of agenda item 97 entitled "Advancement of women" in order to enable the General Assembly to consider the recommendations by the Commission on the Status of Women. In view of this fact, and considering that documents A/49/887 and Corr.1 on this item were circulated only this morning, I therefore postpone consideration of the item to the earliest possible time next week.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.